WON FROM THE FLAMES

BY T. S. BREEN.

Great forest fires had been numerous that spring in the mountainous districts of northern Arizona. There had been two dry years in succession, leaving the country a veritable tinder box. Added to this were the heavy and persistent spring winds that would fan a small spark into a raging hell in a few hours.

The government officers and line-riders were kept on a constant move to save the country from conflagration. The country was sparsely settled. Here and there, miles apart, where a small seep or spring furnished them water, a settler would sometimes be found, deep in the woods. A rougher and more rocky country never lay outdoors. Canyons split it up in all directions; mesas were covered with pine timber and on the rocky, seamy sides of the hills were thick cedars and chaparral, making a tangled jungle that even the old pioneers would occasionally get lost in.

It was late in the spring when the biggest fire of a decade broke out, and at a time when the wind was blowing a terrific gale. It marked as high as 60 miles an hour, falling at sunset, seemingly to rest for the coming day when it would break out again with renewed force.

A small camp fire left unattended started the sea of flame on its journey of destruction. A heavy wind was behind it, driving it due north toward the highest peaks of the mountains. The government rider in charge of the district fought it for two days with what help he could get from the ranchers, but on the third day it broke away from him. He rode to the nearest telegraph station and wired his superior officer for help. Help which was 20 miles away, and soon a force of 20 men was on its way as fast as horses could run. The driver rolled and swayed in his seat, bracing now and then against his seat-mate as the four-horse team swung around the sharp curves and over the rough road.

Smoke covered the whole country for miles around; valleys were filled with it, and great black clouds hung over and hid the mountain peaks. As far as the eye could reach there was a leaping, twisting, roaring sea of flame. As the night wore on, the smoke settled more closely to the ground and shut out the moonlight, adding more to the awful beauty of the wild scene; giant trees blazing from root to the topmost branches gave out their spectral, shimmering light, which seemed to gain in size until they appeared many times their actual size and height.

Above the din and roar came the occasional boom of a distant tree as it crashed down into the canyon below upon the rocks; up steep mountain sides the flames rolled and crackled, darting here and there, licking up everything in its reach; the wind whirled it here and there; boiling smoke rolled close to the ground, covering the men and choking them until they were nearly strangled; now and then they would come stumbling out of the black smoke and stagger away to get their breath. Then after a few gasps of fresh air got by lying close to the ground, back they would go again, black and begrimed; beating the fire out here, chopping and cutting away logs, fighting like fiends to stop the spread.

Along toward morning, Charlie Lewis, one of the regular range riders of the district, came up to the officer in charge of the reserve, with an anxious look on his begrimed and sweaty face.

"Captain," if I ain't mistaken, there's a ranch over there in that draw about a mile to the left. I hadn't thought of it before, but old man Williams lives there. He moved back there about a month ago with his daughter. I hink something oughter be done to see if he ain't got out of there before the fire runs onto him."

"Good God, man, no one could get through this living hell for a mile and come out alive. Unless," he added, half to himself, "unless there happened to be a break in the fire line somewhere that split it around a canyon."

"Well, I'll tell you, cap, if you'll jest let me try I may be able to do something fer 'em. I ain't worth a dam, nohow, and it won't hurt much if I don't make it. I know most of the country like a faro layout, so does my bronc. If I don't get through, cap—why, it'll be the right kind of a start fer me in the next world, ennyhow," he said, with a little deprecating laugh.

The cap, as he called him, grasped him by the hand, mumbled something under his breath that sounded like "d—d fool," wiped something out of his eyes, and said:

"Well, go ahead if you are bound to."

In a short time Charlie had secured his little sure-footed beast, and soaking his clothes with what water could be spared from the drinking water in the canteens he was ready for the journey. As he spurred his horse down into the fire, the men gave him a cheer. He waved his big hat at them and was gone amidst the smoke and falling logs. Trees and undergrowth were not thick and there were patches left here and there unburned owing to the ledges of rock and huge piles of bowlders.

He dug his spurs into the little beast and down they went, into gullies, up over steep rocks, with Charlie laying close to his horse's neck—running, stumbling, all but falling at times in the treacherous lights and shadows of the blazing wood. Once a great pine came crashing down a few feet in front of his horse and both were covered with burning sparks. With a scream of pain the little horse gathered himself up again and passed in safety. By strange good luck, or by instinct of the horse, he struck a trail that led him into a road to the old man's cabin in the draw. Here he dug his spurs viciously into the horse's sides and forced him to the top of his speed. Straight to the cabin he went, where he half fell from his horse, burst in the door, yelling as he did so to arouse the sleeping occupants.

Williams and his daughter had gone to bed, thinking themselves safe from the fire owing to the wind driving it to the north and east away from their home. Half asleep Williams aroused his daughter, and while she hastily dressed he broke into the corral and secured horses. It was but the work of a moment before they were on the return trip, Charlie leading the horse with the girl, followed by the old man. Down the road they went as fast as the horses would carry them through the smoke. Charlie had thoughtfully wrapped the girl in a blanket before the start.

The flames swept so close to the ground that it was impossible to follow the road. Williams was lost from the two ahead a short time after leaving the cabin. Lewis turned and yelled, but his voice was drowned in the roar. To hesitate meant death. The horse behind stumbled and fell. In a moment Lewis was down beside the girl and raised her in a half unconscious condition onto the saddle with him and continued his heroic ride.

Almost hopelessly he spurred his staggering horse on; it seemed hours to him. Then wrapping the blanket tightly around the girl, for one more desperate effort, he jabbed the cruel spurs into both sides of his lagging bronco and plunged up a steep hillside and through the roaring flames. He was nearly swept from his horse by burning brands and partially blinded as they struck him across the face. As he reached the brow of the hill his horse stumbled and fell. In a second he was on his feet, and with the girl in his arms started again for the outer edge of the fire.

At last hope gone, blinded, weak from his gallant fight, scarred in a hundred places, his face and hands burned almost to a crisp, he fell exhausted with his burden. He had reached the limit of human endurance. He had hardly fallen when he heard a familiar voice near at hand yelling to his men:

"Cut away that log, men! Heave it into the canyon below."

"Help, cap; help, quick," he managed to scream, and in less time than the telling takes Lewis and the girl were whisked from the sea of flames with willing hands. In a short time the girl recovered sufficient to tell the story of the wild ride, but Lewis remained unconscious for days.

A search was instituted for the missing Williams as soon as it was possible to do so, but it was weeks afterward that his charred remains were found beside the bones of his faithful horse. He had wandered around in the fire until both were suffocated.

Except for the effects or the smoke, Mabel Williams suffered no ill effects from the ride. Charlie's forethought in wrapping her in the blanket had saved her from burns.

The man seemed remarkably well content with his nurse during the time his burns were healing. One day he said to her:

"I think I'd ought to have to pay for that horse and saddle, Mabel—mighty good horse and double cinch saddle, too."

"I don't think you should have more than you can carry, Charlie—on a warm day, anyhow."

"Ouch, May, that's my sore arm that I got foolin' round in the fire; you'll have to hug me on the other side."

And pay for that horse and saddle is a standing joke between them yet.

A DISAPPOINTED MAN.

The Prisoner Hoped for a Reprieve to the Last Moment and What He Received.

"The most disappointed man I ever saw," said William J. Casey, a Baltimore financier, to a correspondent of the Chicago Inter Ocean, "was a poor wretch who was about to be hanged in one of the northeastern counties of Maryland. I happened to be there about the time and accepted an invitation to witness the execution.

"The fellow's lawyers had been working hard to save his neck, and there seemed to be some possibility that he might be reprieved. The time set for the execution arrived, however, and the sheriff made plans to carry out the execution. The march to the scaffold had begun and the prisoner was about to mount the steps when a messenger arrived, banged frantically at the gate of the jail yard, and was admitted, waving a telegram in his hand.

"The procession was at once stopped and the sheriff took the telegram, but saw that it was addressed to the condemned man. He handed it to the fellow, who, trembling with hope, tore open the envelope. He cast his eager glance at the message, paled, and let it drop from his hand. The sheriff picked up the paper, read it, and the march to the scaffold was resumed In a few minutes the man who had hoped for a reprieve was in eternity.

"The message was from some minister who had become interested in his case. It told him to trust in the Lord and he would be saved!"

Loss of Vessels.

Nearly 1,000 vessels are lost annually.

DANCERS OF LAUGHING.

Instances in Which Untimely Mirth Brought Down Its Own Punishment.

It was awkward for the czar's confidential adviser, Baron Enidoff, a few weeks ago, that he had not a quicker control over his features, for a laugh at the wrong moment lost him his high position and £12,000 a year, says London Answers.

While the royal suite was at Compiegne, soon after the arrival, the czar was tired, and a little irritable, by the effects of the long journey. While going through the big library, which was part of the great apartments prepared for him, he slipped on a wolfskin mat that lay on the highly polished floor, made a wild attempt to save himself, and clutched at one of his attendants.

He nearly brought himself and his standby to the ground, but he just managed to avoid a fall. The spectacle was rather ludicrous, especially in such a stately personage; and when the rather irritated monarch turned round he found his favorite Enidoff indulging in a grin of amusement, which he could not suppress.

The czar, who detests levity on state occasions, spoke very sharply to the culprit, who, next day, was dismissed his post, and relegated to an assistant secretaryship, with plenty of hard work to do, and wherein he never sees the czar at all. Although wealthy and of the oldest nobility, the baron dared not refuse the minor service. His former stipend was £12,000 a year.

But the kaiser, on the whole, is the most dangerous person to laugh at, or before, and more than one person has "done for" himself in this way. So did the unfortunate Gough Milbanke find it—the clever but bluff Scottish colonial administrator. It was he who used to command the Sultan Abou Din's troops and manage the Arabian finances.

The kaiser took him up, four years ago, as a guest, with a view to making use of him in the new "expansion" policy of the German empire, and had decided to give him a fine position in the east, to guard German interests in China, at a princely remuneration, of course. The kaiser sees to these things himself, and anybody who becomes one of his right-hand men is pretty well set up for life.

At one of the audiences given him at Potsdam, Milbanke was giving the emperor the benefit of his experience, and receiving his orders, when the kaiser made a rather absurd suggestion as to eastern diplomacy, proposing to win the confidence of the Japanese and Kurile islanders with presents.

Milbanke, bursting into a guffaw, asked the kaiser if he thought the Japanese were Congo niggers, who could be bought over with a few glass beads and a flint-lock gun? The kaiser froze at once, wished Milbanke good night, and never reopened relations with him.

The moral is, when you are chatting with a king don't forget he is a king, and dig him in the ribs. A still more amusing case of this kind was the mistake of another Scottish administrator, Duncan McVea, who was, next to McLeavy Brown, of Corea, the most famous of "wandering" governors. Scotland, by the way, supplies 80 per cent. of the world's pioneer administrators, as well as its engineers.

McVea was dealing with that pleasant but touchy monarch, the king of Portugal, who had proposed to put the rather shaky government of the Cape Verde islands into his hands, to set things going and pull the finances together. This would have been a big step, and meant some $25,000 a year to the famous adventurer; but he had too much of what Scotchmen are supposed to lack—sense of humor. At any rate, it was the ruin of the finest prospect he ever had.

The king became a little excited and irritated at the various commonsense objections that McVea, knowing what he was talking about, opposed to some of the monarch's plans, and though the king speaks admirable English as a rule, when excited it becomes a very odd mixture indeed. This, finally so worked on McVea's feelings that he smiled audibly with the result that he was promptly ordered away, and the Cape Verdes still lack a Scottish governor to look after their affairs.

The Successful Eye.

There are two classes of human eyes, says Prof. J. M. Simon, the eminent oculist. First, the cold and indifferent eye, which falls upon you with the same interest that it would fall upon some large building or anything else. Then there is the warm, flattering eye that indicates a human interest. The gray is the strong one. I have observed in the majority of cases of people who have risen to eminence that the eye has been gray, although I am inclined to believe that the gray eye is weaker than any other. A gray eye can charm, and in every instance I give a man with that color of eye more consideration than if his eyes are of another color.—N. Y. Herald.

Wouldn't Do.

"Is my hat on—?" began Mrs. Collingwood, when her husband interrupted:

"Yes, your hat's on straight. Come along, or we shall be late."

"If it's straight, it won't do. Wait a minute till I go back into the house and tilt it a little."—Detroit Free Press.

They Only Seem So.

We do not believe that people are half as well satisfied with themselves as they pretend.—Washington (Ia.) Democrat.

His Mistake.

He had worked for many years in a dry goods store, but fate placed him behind the counter in a coal office, and that was the cause of his undoing. A lady entered the coal office, one day, and said she needed two tons of coal at once.

"All right," said the clerk, tipping the ashes from a cigarette in a dreamy fashion; "will you take it with you or have it sent, madam?"—Yonkers Statesman.

Hazarding a Guess.

Delia—Phwat is this copper company that the man o' the house does be talkin' about so much?

Bridget—Shure, Oi suppose 'tis a polissman's union, no less.—Philadelphia Press.

THE MARKETS.

Cincinnati,			
CATTLE—Common .	2 75	@	3 90
Choice butchers ..	4 90	@	5 25
CALVES—Extra		@	6 50
HOGS—Select ship'rs	6 55	@	6 65
Mixed packers	6 10	@	6 35
SHEEP—Extra	3 40	@	3 60
LAMBS—Extra	5 35	@	5 50
FLOUR—Spring pat.	4 00	@	4 20
WHEAT—No. 2 red.		@	89
CORN—No. 2 mixed.		@	69
OATS—No. 2 mixed.		@	49
RYE—No. 2		@	70½
HAY—Ch. timothy ..		@14	00
PORK—Family		@16	75
LARD—Steam		@	9 85
BUTTER—Ch. dairy.	13½	@	15
Choice creamery ..		@	26½
APPLES—Choice ...	4 50	@	5 00
POTATOES	2 70	@	2 75
Sweet potatoes ...	2 25	@	2 50
TOBACCO—New	5 95	@	8 15
Old	5 55	@12	25
Chicago.			
FLOUR—Win. patent	3 70	@	3 90
WHEAT—No. 2 red.	84½	@	86½
No. 3 spring	66¾	@	77⅞
CORN—No. 2 mixed.		@	63¼
OATS—No. 2 mixed.	45½	@	45¾
RYE—No. 2		@	65¼
PORK—Mess 16	00	@16	10
LARD—Steam 10	12½	@10	15
New York.			
FLOUR—Win. patent	3 75	@	4 00
WHEAT—No. 2 red.		@	88¾
CORN—No. 2 mixed.		@	70⅜
OATS—No. 2 mixed.		@	52
RYE—Western		@	75⅛
PORK—Family 18	00	@20	00
LARD—Steam		@10	40
Baltimore.			
WHEAT—No. 2 red.	83½	@	83¾
Southern	81	@	84
CORN—No. 2 mixed.	66¼	@	66½
OATS—No. 2 mixed.	51½	@	52
CATTLE—Butchers .	5 00	@	5 25
HOGS—Western	6 75	@	7 00
Louisville.			
WHEAT—No. 2 red.		@	85
CORN—No. 2 mixed.		@	71
OATS—No. 2 mixed.	50	@	50½
PORK—Mess		@16	00
LARD—Steam		@	9 75
Indianapolis.			
WHEAT—No. 2 red.		@	86
CORN—No. 2 mixed.		@	67½
OATS—No. 2 mixed.	48½	@	49